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'Boiler Tech Challenge, Aim for the Stars' will test high school students' knowledge of applied engineering concepts

COLUMBUS, Ind. — About 200 high school students from across southeastern Indiana will converge on the Columbus Learning Center on Friday, April 23, to test their engineering knowledge and be challenged to solve a variety of space-themed tasks.

The Purdue College of Technology at Columbus will host its inaugural "Boiler Tech Challenge," a Project Lead the Way-affiliated competition for high school students interested in careers in what are referred to as the STEM disciplines – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

One of the competitions is similar to the "Jeopardy" TV show, and Columbus Mayor Fred Armstrong has volunteered to serve as the "game show" host.

"This competition challenges high school students to think creatively and apply engineering design principles to solve problems that, this year, are built around a space theme" said Andy Schaffer, director of the Purdue College of Technology at Columbus.

In years past, the closest competition of this type was in Terre Haute, but Anji McKinney, student services coordinator at the Purdue College of Technology at Columbus, wanted to provide similar opportunities to students in this region. "It's a wonderful opportunity for students in this area to show off their engineering abilities and it also allows Purdue to showcase the world-class educational opportunities it offers right here in their community," said McKinney.

Several area high schools are sending teams to Boiler Tech Challenge, including Columbus East, Columbus North, Hauser, Greenwood, Jennings County, New Palestine, South Dearborn, and South Decatur.

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Astronaut Donald R. McMonagle (Retired Colonel, USAF), manager of Launch Integration at the Kennedy Space Center (KSC), will deliver a keynote address at 9:00 a.m. A veteran of three space flights, McMonagle has logged over 605 hours in space. In his current position, he is responsible for final Shuttle preparation, launch execution, and return of the orbiter to KSC following landings at any location other than KSC. He is chair of the Mission Management Team, and is the final authority for launch decision. His appearance is courtesy of Space Port Indiana, Inc.

Other community sponsors for this year's Boiler Tech Challenge are Coca-Cola of Columbus, Columbus Community Education Coalition, Cummins, Inc., EcO15, Game Plan Graphics, L.L.C., and National Fluid Power Association.

Purdue College of Technology at Columbus offers bachelor's degrees in computer and information technology, industrial technology, mechanical engineering technology, and organizational leadership and supervision. Students can complete all degree requirements in Columbus.

For information about Boiler Tech Challenge or Purdue degree opportunities at the Purdue College of Technology at Columbus, visit the college at room 1200 of the Columbus Learning Center or www.purdue.edu/columbus, or contact Anji McKinney at amckinne@purdue.edu or (812) 314-8528.

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